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RETURN
OF THE EHS
HOMECOMING
ASSEMBLY

PAGE 04

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Happy fall, EHS! I hope your first quarter has been a happy and productive one, as hard as it is to believe it's already over. I'm thrilled to be starting my second year on the Claw staff, and I can't wait to bring you all another year of great journalism.

To kick off this year's first issue, student life editor Chase Golem writes about the first spirit assembly to take place at EHS in three years. Pera Onal follows up by exploring breakfast habits in high school.

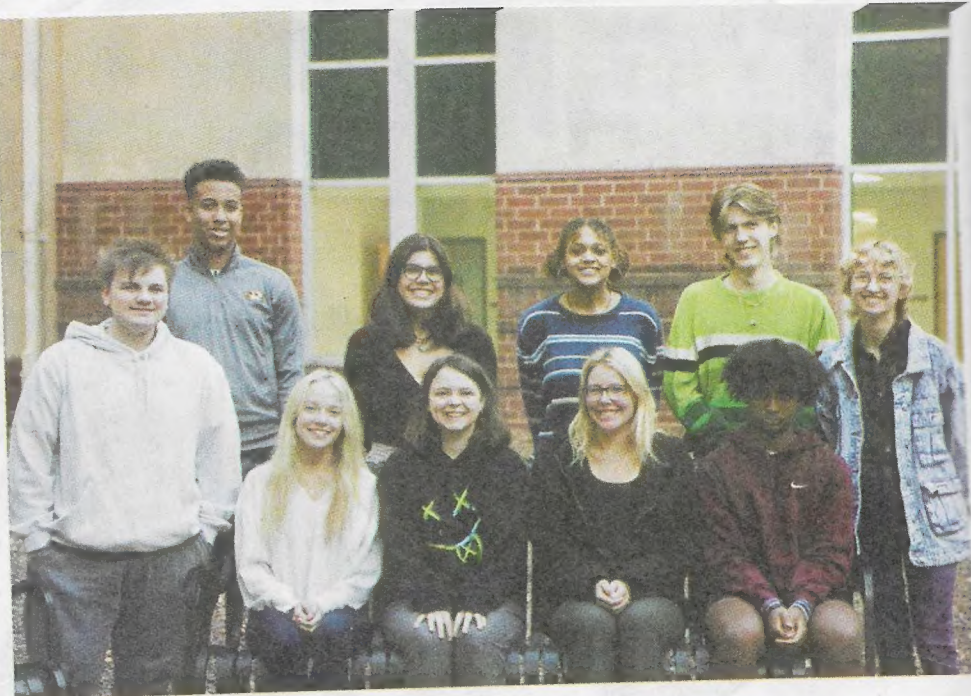
In the sports section, Jalen Flowers looks into the work that athletes do in their off-season to stay in shape. The section closes out with a roundup of students named "athlete of the quarter."

In culture, Annisyn Krebs-Carr dives into the world of dating in a social media era. Views editor Nat Becker asks highschoolers how Halloween has changed as they got older.

In the views section, culture editor Maddox Karnes defends drag queen story hours and Maggie Terry criticizes the way rumors spread on Facebook pages for EHS parents. Also in that section is our class editorial, which encourages students to respect their peers.

Thank you for picking up a copy of the Claw. We're so lucky to write for you, EHS.

CASPAR DOWDY
Editor-in-chief



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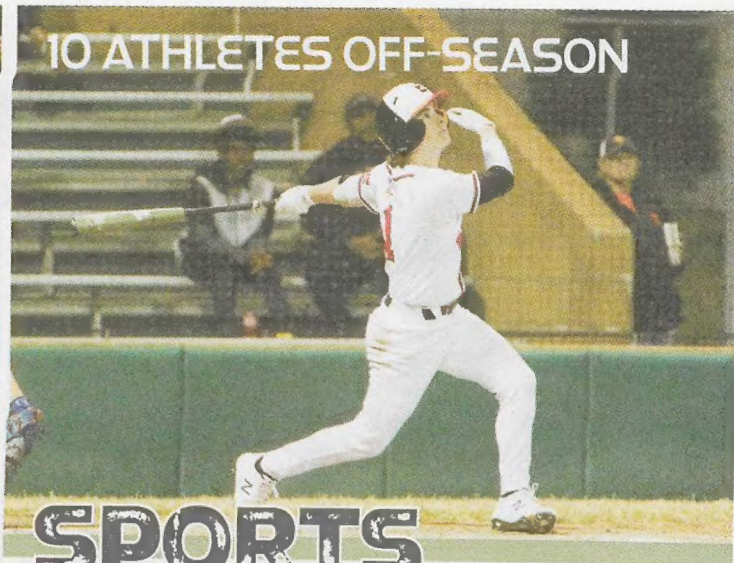
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The goal of The Claw is to report Life, Sports, Culture and Views stories to the students and faculty of Edwardsville High School. Students in Journalism and Yearbook primarily contribute to the magazine, but students outside of these programs can submit work and be published if that work is exceptional.

The Claw is a student-run publication, and the views featured in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of District 7 or any of its employees.

We appreciate letters to the editor, so long as the topics remain school appropriate. These letters may be sent to EDWARDSVILLEPUBLICATIONS@GMAIL.COM with "Letter to the Editor" in the subject line, or brought to room A113 before or after school.

We reserve the right to reject any letters for any reason, including lack of space, without explanation.

EHS hosts its first spirit assembly in years, new for underclassmen

After COVID protocols kept the all-school events from taking place for two years, the homecoming week tradition came roaring back.

by Chase Golem, student life editor

After a long absence, the spirit assembly that gets EHS ready for homecoming has made a return for the 2022-2023 school year.

For the past two years COVID-19 protocols have caused the annual homecoming and holiday assemblies to be canceled, along with many other events leading to homecoming. But as COVID restrictions ease, big events like the assembly have been able to return.

Behind it all is social science teacher and student council sponsor Jamie Kupferer, who was in charge of planning of the spirit assembly for the first time. In years past, before the several-year break, current Lincoln Middle School assistant principal Melissa Beck oversaw it.

"Ms. Beck hears from me often," Mrs. Kupferer said. "She ran it for almost 12 years, and she was so good with what she did. She left me with everything she has done, digitally sent me everything."

Mrs. Kupferer was joined by seniors Lexi Trimm and Izzy O'Day, who took the lead among the other student council members.

"Lexi and I made the schedule mainly, but Mrs. Gray and Mrs. Kupferer have helped us out a ton too," O'Day said.

Spanish teacher Tricia Gray is the co-sponsor of student council, and this was also her first time planning a spirit assembly and homecoming.

"My high school that I went to was actually very small, and we didn't have a football team. We did our homecoming in January. It was kind of a different vibe because we wondered if it was going to happen if it snowed," Mrs. Gray said. "I want to give that experience to our students with the hope that they look back on it fondly."

With two years between this year's assembly and the last one, only the class of 2023 was able to remember what a spirit assembly is like. Those in the grades below, whose only experience with most spirit events is second-hand information, have now had a chance to see the assembly for themselves.

"I am so glad spirit assemblies are back," junior Olivia Kolnsberg said in the days leading up to this year's assembly, which took place on Oct. 6. "I feel like it is such an exciting way for the school to get more involved in school spirit and to see everything that students are involved in. I am super excited to have our first one this week."

The assembly gathered the entire school, letting more than



photo by Chase Golem

The EHS varsity cheer squad holds up signs as part of their cheer routine during the spirit assembly. "It was kind of scary because there was a lot of people, but we felt confident in the routine we had," senior Mackenzie Petri said.

“

They're a huge part of school spirit and something that all the school loves to participate in.

”

- senior Izzy O'Day

2,400 students come to one place to celebrate EHS. Those who put the event together are trying to make sure it's not the only event of its kind this year.

Mrs. Kupferer and Mrs. Gray, along with student council, are still planning opportunities for school spirit. These events, however, depend on decisions in the next few student council sessions.

"Usually, we try to do one in the spring for sure, now that we are kind of back at it," Mrs. Kupferer said. "The holiday one is up for debate. It takes a lot of planning, and we have to adjust the class schedule and stuff."

For Mrs. Kupferer, the long time between the 2019 assembly and now, has allowed them to refresh the assembly and introduce some new things.

"We haven't had one in so long, so the only people who remember a pep assembly are seniors," Mrs. Kupferer said. "We really have a chance to kind of recreate it in a way, hopefully make it really good." ■



photo by Chase Golem

The return of - most - EHS school spirit traditions

In years past, Fox 2 Pep Zone came to local high schools to broadcast pep rallies. The rallies would take place before school, giving students the opportunity to show their school spirit on camera. However, this year, the station didn't make its usual trip to Edwardsville.

"Fox 2 has not been doing them this year," Mrs. Kupferer said. "We've been looking, and we haven't seen any in the morning. Tim Ezell has not come to any of the pep zones or anything."

Fox 2 has featured pep rallies from some St. Louis area high schools, including Alton High School, but has yet to feature EHS this year.



photo by Chase Golem

Left In between events during the spirit assembly, Tiger Paul high-fives senior Daniel Vanston in the front row. **Top** Senior Ellie Bozarth and social science teacher Sairee Knabe fight to keep a balloon afloat as they compete during a student-teacher game during the spirit assembly. The game was a new addition to the events of the spirit assembly.

The most important meal of the day is actually important

by Pera Onal, staff writer

Breakfast: the most important meal of the day. You probably hear it all the time, right? But how beneficial is it really, and do people actually make a habit to eat it every day?

A survey of 271 EHS students showed that 36% of students said they don't eat breakfast, 32% said they do and 31% said they don't every day but do occasionally. Most of the students who said no also said by saying they don't have time in the mornings, or they just aren't hungry when they wake up.

Freshman Madison Armstrong, part of the 31%, said she usually drinks coffee instead of eating anything because of how early school lunch times are.

"I eat breakfast on Wednesdays because I have C lunch," Armstrong said. "But on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays I have A lunch, and I just think it's too early."

Although not eating breakfast might make some feel better, Christy T. Tangney, a clinical dietitian at the Rush University Medical Center, said it has some unhealthy long-term effects. She said people who don't have breakfast are more likely to become malnourished or overweight and are inclined to eat unhealthy snacks throughout the day.

"Studies have found that although people who skip breakfast eat slightly fewer calories during the day, they tend to have a higher body mass index," she said in an article on the Rush University System for Health website.

Additionally, Tangney said eating breakfast helps people, especially students, have better memory and attention, which leads to a healthy lifestyle with healthy decisions.

Sophomore Beck Crider said he feels like he would have "better days" if he ate breakfast, but he wakes up too late to be able to. "I think I would be more energized and good to be around if I ate breakfast more often," he said.

The food you eat for breakfast, however, is just as important as eating it at all.

Crider said he usually just eats "cereal or waffles with bacon" when he's able to have breakfast.

While Tangney recommended cereals, specifically ones high in fiber with less added sugar, she also recommended adding fruit with every breakfast, as well as some form of protein and dairy.

For people who aren't hungry in the mornings, the Better Health Channel's website suggests trying new foods to increase your appetite or reducing the size of your evening meals so you can become hungrier in the mornings. For those who struggle with time, the website suggests preparing food the night or weekend before, or simply just waking up 10 to 15 minutes earlier than usual.

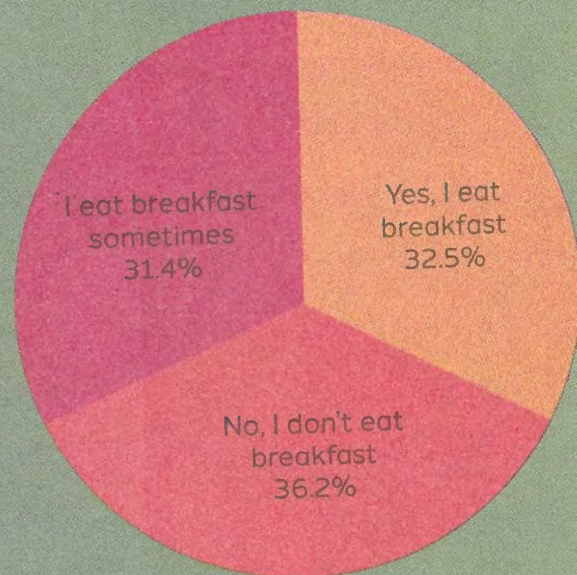
"Breakfast is like exercising," Tangney said in the article on the Rush website. "If you make room for it in the morning, you'll feel great throughout the day." ■

Don't know what to eat?

- Overnight oats with fruit
- Smoothies made with yogurt or milk
- Whole-grain toast topped with eggs, avocado, hummus or any type of nut butter
- Yogurt with fruit and granola

Don't have enough time to eat?

- Prepare your breakfast the night or weekend before
- Try waking up a few minutes earlier to make and eat breakfast
- Get rid of any time-wasting habits, like checking texts or social media



Survey of 271 EHS students.

BeReal offers an alternative to fakeness on today's social media

by Maddox Karnes, culture editor

In an age of Instagram editing and Snapchat filters, social media has a new option entering the ring: the time has come to BeReal.

BeReal is a social media app that started up in 2020 but is getting more traction this year. According to Social Media Today, BeReal is up 315% in downloads this year. In a survey of 335 EHS students, approximately 66% said they have BeReal.

The app has its users take a photo on the app once a day at a random time and upload the photo. An alert will be sent when it is time to take the day's picture and once a user has taken and uploaded their picture, they can see other people's images. The point of the app is to show what the person is doing at that exact point in time.

Users are supposed to upload their image within a two-minute period. It allows for pictures to be uploaded late, but users will see the picture was posted late. The goal is to usher in the idea of being candid on social media.

"I use BeReal because it's fun to see what my friends are doing at the moment they see the BeReal," senior Tiara Arzola said.

The app differs from other social media in that you can't post or curate whenever you want to. This aspect of authenticity has attracted the attention of many EHS students.

"Unlike Instagram and Snapchat, it is not showing a filtered, glamorized or unauthentic life," Arzola said. "This makes BeReal a judgment-free zone which allows people to have more fun and not stress."

Another way BeReal strays from the classic tropes of social media is its ability to be put down.

"[I think it's become popular] because it's not really like something you can scroll through for hours," junior Jozie Beedie

said. "It's cool that you take one picture out of the day and it's fun to see what people are doing at the same time as you."

While many see BeReal as a fun, new take on social media, some are reluctant to believe it's any better than its predecessors.

Approximately 46% of EHS students said they believe BeReal does not do a good job at showing people's "authentic selves."

"I don't like BeReal," senior Selin Aktuna said. "It's just another form of social media that's used to show how good our lives are."

Aktuna believes the intentions behind those with BeReal and those with other social media apps are not entirely different.

"People fake their BeReals so they seem cool," Aktuna said. "It just perpetuates the feeling of 'I have to be doing something cool at all times or else I'm just not cool.'"

For many users, the idea of the app itself is the issue, one of whom is senior Emmy Larrew.

"I really think the intentions are well-off, but the idea of people seeking your private life at any instance of the day is kind of off-putting," Larrew said.

Larrew also doesn't think the goal of BeReal can be attained and that its users can take advantage of the fact that it allows you to post late.

"Too many people save them for a good moment and [it] ruins the idea of the app," Larrew said. "People that do take them in the moment are usually just doing homework."

Others see the app as an insight to people's true lives, while others view it as another way for people to curate their public persona. However, senior Chris Karateew thinks others are reading into it too much.

"It's just one casual post every day," Karateew said. ■

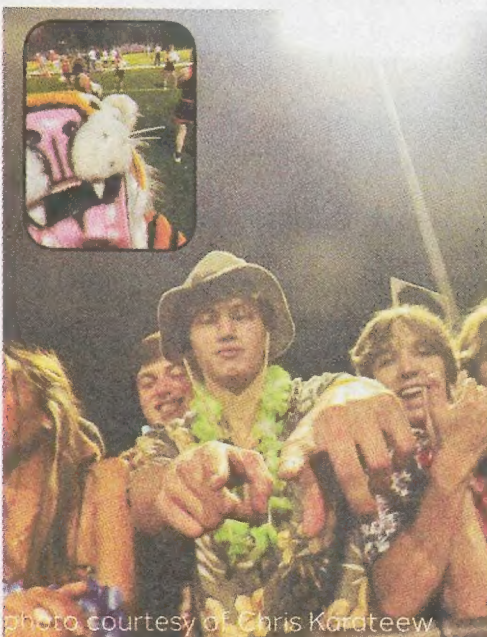


photo courtesy of Chris Karateew



photo courtesy of Maddox Karnes

Left Senior Chris Karateew poses with friends while the Tiger mascot takes a photo on BeReal. The group captured their daily BeReal at a home football game against O'Fallon. **Right** Singer-songwriter Conan Gray takes a fan's BeReal photo during an Oct. 3 concert in Chesterfield, Missouri.

Another Step Toward Normality

After two and a half years of online and restricted in-class learning, field trips are coming back and providing hands-on experiences for students.

by Destiny Albrecht, staff writer

In the morning, students are tired as their eyes begin to close and heads sink further to the desks. In the afternoon, they're ready to rush out to their cars and finally go home. Millions of other things are on their minds, and school normally isn't one of them.

Field trips are one way to engage students, encouraging them to participate and pay attention in learning experiences.

Many school activities and functions are back to normal after the COVID-19 outbreak. But students are still staying put in classes and teachers continue to conduct lessons on the board.

Before, schools were not as reluctant to get students out of the classroom and into real world experiences with field trips. Where is that eagerness now?

In elementary and middle school, schools took field trips several times throughout the year to give the children a break from the typical pencil and paper learning. Everyone would pile onto a school bus and take a journey to a nearby event like a sports game or museum.

That was years ago. Are younger kids getting a chance to experience that at all? Do high schoolers miss the field trips that were offered? Are we all missing out on the full learning adventures?

"I think it's important for students to get a specific peripheral and be able to accurately learn in a real life experience," senior Megan Joy said. "They need to be engaged, and field trips are one way to do that."

Field trips offer a way for students to learn in a different setting, depending on which class it is for.

Taking a biology class on a small trip outside for the hour is nice, but imagine how much grades could improve if they were taken to a local lab or garden to observe in a real life scenario. Taking a history class to a museum or an art class to an exhibit could help students learn more about the specific subject.

According to Joy, many of her teachers are trying to bring them back this year. Heather Haskins, for example, advocated for her AP Literature students taking a trip to the SIUE library to study and use the databases that are offered for their research papers.

She'll be taking her students on Oct. 18. Ms. Haskins plans the trip to last from the beginning of second hour to the middle of last.

During this time, her students will have a short tour of the SIUE campus, free range of the resources in the library and lunch in the student center.

"I think it's very important for kids to get hands-on experience," Ms. Haskins said, "and I'm really excited for our trip. I think it's going to be super fun."

High school students aren't the only ones excited for field trips to return. Younger students in elementary school have likely never even taken one before.

"My siblings aren't taking any field trips, and haven't in a really long time," Joy said.



photo courtesy of AP Images



photo courtesy of AP Images

Above New Mexico students release native fish during a field trip to the banks of the Rio Grande. **Below** Students at a Vermont middle school board the bus for a field trip.

Field trips can make concepts more memorable for students as well as strengthen skills and stimulate interest and motivation in children.

While field trips are appreciated for the study involvement, listening to a lecture for hours on end can get boring. Students tend to zone out after a while, according to Joy, and not pay attention to what they should be learning. Field trips offer a break for students to practice and engage in schoolwork.

"I'm really excited," senior Nyhira Adu-Affum, who is also attending SIUE with Haskins, said. "We've been stuck in this walled classroom for so long and something about it makes me want to fall asleep during our lessons. I'd really like to change that and do something a little bit different." ■

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Athletes commit to their sports year-round, practice in off-season

For some EHS athletes, their work starts long before their season does.

by Jalen Flowers

Commitment to athletics is not only present during the regular season for EHS sports.

Fans and family are only able to see the showcases every sports team puts out on game day. Many of them are aware of the work that goes on during the week, with daily practices that are crucial to an athlete's success. What the public doesn't see is the offseason. To athletes and coaches, a two-month season is a culmination of a 10-month offseason of work, focus, and diligence.

Preparation isn't school exclusive. Many athletes engage in club-sports, workout programs, or summer-only exhibition teams in order to improve their skills. Within the school though, sports are dedicating the whole summer to sharpening their abilities.

Coaches strategize their approach to the offseason. For baseball, the emphasis is on movement ability and improving athleticism.

"We begin towards the end of October and workout three to four times per week until our season starts in March," head baseball coach Tim Funkhouser said. "We utilize a program designed by athletic performance coach Zach Dechant out of Texas Christian University."

Dechant's nationally recognized program focuses on ability and improving athlete's movement.

"Our workouts are usually one hour long. We want to be competitive during the season," Funkhouser said. "We're developing movement over maxes, and it has helped our baseball players become more athletic, build mobility and increase strength."

The methods vary per sport. For girls soccer, the programs utilize conditioning and team building in order to be in the best position for the season.

"Our pre-season workouts start after winter break, and we meet three times a week after school," girls' soccer coach Abby Federmann said. "One day a week of functional fitness like body weight exercises along with max aerobic speed training and one day a week of sprints for conditioning."

Federmann does not underestimate the team chemistry skills that can be developed in these workouts. With weeks of preparation, it's important for her to see her players come together.

"It's a great way for the girls to really know each other and get a feel for their team and coaches. While it's fine for them to participate in workouts with other athletes and teams, I would prefer they do it with us just for the team building opportunity."

The ability to adapt is crucial for coach Federmann, and she believes it's a skill built in the offseason.

"With our quick and compact season, we feel the need to be ready for whatever the year brings us. Because our season is shorter than most, we don't have as much time to refine ourselves

once we start," coach Federmann said.

"I am always letting the girls know, the better shape we are going into the season, the less conditioning we have to do during the season, the more we can focus on soccer and not the sprint."

For an athlete, the offseason includes more than just school sanctioned workouts. Senior wrestler Drew Landau's work continues out of season.

"It really gives you an edge," Landau said. "I lift and wrestle outside of school, mostly during the summer just for the sake of accomplishing my goals during the season. I'm usually working on strength and technique. It's a super underrated part of being an athlete."

The competitive factor drives coaches and athletes alike.

"When you don't do it, you feel like somebody else is passing you up," Landau said. "Your opponent is most likely working on and getting better in the offseason, so why wouldn't you?"



photo by Zach Keffer

Now-senior Cole Funkhouser watches the ball after batting at the first game of the 2022 season, a win against Benet Academy.

Girls basketball team still ready to defend last year's conference title

Even as team dynamics change, the Tigers can taste conference victory.

by Caspar Dowdy, editor-in-chief

After a 28-5 season, the girls basketball team looked nearly untouchable.

But even Southwestern Conference champions can't help but grow up. After losing powerhouses like Sydney Harris to graduation and college ball, the team would have to adjust to a new normal, and a new dynamic.

"We will definitely have to work a lot harder to be as successful as we were last year, but I think we are still capable," senior Dallas Jenkins said.

There are sources of hope for the team, with talented underclassmen and the return of last year's team members. The comeback of senior Emerson Weller, who sat on the sidelines last year with a torn ACL, "will be huge," according to Jenkins.

"It was definitely a big setback, but I worked hard to get back on the court..." said Weller, who was able to return to basketball with a club team last spring but hasn't played in a Tigers jersey since her sophomore year. "I love playing with my team more than anything."

Weller may have been the one dealing with the injury, but her absence was one the whole team felt. As such, the healing process was something the rest of the team played a part in.

"During my injury, my teammates were constantly there for me. I tried my best to be there for them as well, but it really helped me through the recovery process to have them constantly supporting me," Weller said. "They make the environment a great place to be in and that made the process all a little easier for me."

This season, many of those teammates will be underclassmen, rising into ranks that the class of 2022 left open. But a few years between teammates doesn't make the team any less cohesive, according to sophomore Ellie Neath.

"On the team everyone is like family. All the upperclassmen are understanding and welcoming. They push me and all the underclassmen to be better and lead by example," she said.

The team takes extra care to build a sense of unity, with summer games, open gyms and team meals helping the players come together. And with key members of last year's winning team moving on to D1 offers and life after EHS, the team looks ahead to a season of putting in their best.

"Obviously we lost a lot of our scoring, but that just means we need everyone to step up. We will have basically a whole new roster this year. The seniors will bring tons to the table," Neath said. "This year we will really need to bring energy and heart to each and every game and practice. We aren't seeing losing [the class of 2022] as an excuse to hold us back from working hard day in and out."

While the EHS team looks to fill its ranks with talented underclassmen, it isn't alone. The Alton Redbirds, who fell just



2022 graduate Macy Silvey attempts to score at a Dec. 7 game against O'Fallon.

behind the Tigers in the Southwestern Conference last season, were dominated by freshman and sophomore players in 2022.

Now, with another year of experience behind them, the team could prove a challenge to Edwardsville's mostly-new roster. It's a challenge that the Tigers seem ready to take on, though.

"We had a very talented senior class last year and are definitely going to miss what they brought to the team," Weller said. "However, I think there are a lot of girls willing to work hard to get where we need to be for this upcoming season."

Though the team will have to manage the hurdles that come with a new season, they have their supporters. Harris, now #25 for Central Michigan University's women's basketball, has faith in the team she left behind.

"I'm not worried at all, I know a lot of those underclassmen are capable of stepping up and filling in the spots that graduated," she said. "And I hope that the team can continue to be the top school in our conference and have a great season." ■

MLB changes controversial rules

As the league tries to shorten games, some players see their stats hurt.

by Kody Moore, staff writer

Major League Baseball has updated its rules for the upcoming 2023 season. The new rules ban defensive shifts and add a pitch clock among other changes.

The defensive shift has taken over MLB in the past four years. The shift allows for the defensive fielders to move from their position to a spot where the ball is likely to be hit. It has hurt the batting averages of pull hitters the worst. A pull hitter is a hitter who tends to hit the ball to the same side that he bats on. In the last two seasons, about half of the lefty hitters faced some sort of shift throughout the at-bat.

In the last three years, the defensive shift was used over 30 percent of all at-bats.



The Minnesota Twins shifted over to defend against a lefty pull hitter in a game versus the Baltimore O's.

Many popular lefty hitters such as the Yankees' Anthony Rizzo, Dodgers' Cody Bellinger, and Brewers' Christian Yelich have been the most popular faces affected by the extreme shifts.

From 2012-2019, Anthony Rizzo was a consistent All-Star with an impressive .277 batting average. In the 2020 season, the powerful lefty bat couldn't hit anymore, according to Baseball Reference, Rizzo's batting average dropped to .222 while his expected batting average, or XBA, dropped by 10%.

Another lefty affected heavily is former NL MVP Cody Bellinger. The Dodger first baseman and outfielder was coming off an electric MVP season. In 2019, Bellinger batted a .305 average with a 1.035 OPS. In 2020, according to Baseball Savant, the advanced stats showed that he had another great year, but really, it was the opposite. The MVP was destroyed by the

shift. Bellinger's batting average dropped over 50%, and his OPS dropped over .250 points.

According to Baseball Savant, since the 2020 season, Bellinger has experienced over 90% of at-bats with the defense in a shift. That is a large number of defensive shifts compared to the three years that had an average of 64.7% before the 2020 season.

It makes sense why managers use the shift from batter to batter accordingly. Dodgers manager Dave Roberts is one of the top managers to use the defensive shifts. According to a Yahoo article from Sept. 20, the Dodgers have shifted their defense for 10,593 of their 19,980 pitches thrown since the beginning of the season.

"It will impact the game. It absolutely will," said Dave Roberts, "But this is something that Major League Baseball, the players' side feels that it's best for the game."

Another major rule change that was approved was the implementation of the pitch clock. The pitch clock will allow the pitch to have 15 seconds between pitches and 30 seconds between batters throughout the game. Pitch clocks will be implemented due to intentions from the MLB to shorten games.

The pitch clock was tested throughout this year's Minor League Baseball season and was a success. According to the MLB, the MiLB games lasted 24 minutes less than a normal game from any other year.

Usually, it is the relievers who take the most time between pitches. According to Baseball Savant, St. Louis Cardinals right-handed reliever Giovanny Gallegos leads the league in most time in-between pitches. Gallegos takes an average of 26 seconds between each pitch.



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Athlete Of The Quarter

Coaches submitted their pick for the fall athlete of the quarter, and explained why they think the student deserves the title.



Nicole Johnson is senior captain who just won state. She has been a varsity starter for all four years of her high school career. She is the first girls golfer to win state for the Tigers.



TJ Thiems is a senior that has made many improvements since last year. Thiems has been a pleasant surprise for the boys golf team this year.



Avery Osborne is a four year field hockey player and a three year varsity starter. She is a hard worker and dedicated to her team. She has great field awareness and makes good decisions on the field.



Chloe Koons has played No. 1 singles since her freshman year, and has been one of the truly remarkable players in the history of the school. She has recorded multiple wins against top players.



Karis Chen put in a lot of work over the summer and it is really showing in her performances. She has gone a lifetime best time in every event she has swim in this year and perform in relays.



Ava Waltenberger has been a member of the EHS volleyball team for all four years. Ava holds her teammates to a high standard and pushes them to perform at a high level each day.



Scott Baxter is the top senior leader and captain of the team. He shows his leadership to his younger teammates. The boys cross country team is hoping to return back to state.



Emily Nuttall is the top runner on the girls cross country team and is one of the senior leaders. She is constantly in the top 15 for girls competitions.



Tyler Dacus has been the vocal leader of the boys soccer team. He organizes the team in games and practices, and he is that voice that gives constant direction to our players.

Is social media an ally or enemy in the teen dating sphere?

Social media apps such as Instagram and Snapchat have altered the concept of dating for teenagers forever, the question is for better or for worse.

by Annisyn Krebs-Carr, staff writer

Most of us have seen all of the cheesy 2000s rom-coms, read the prince-saves-princess fairy tales and heard the super dramatic love songs blaring on the radio. It usually all ends up the same way; the boy wins the girl over in a dramatic fashion, and everyone lives happily ever after. In today's age of Snapchat and "situationships," this old type of romance may seem harder and harder to come by, but that might not matter.

"I'd say that dating now looks a lot less formal to older generations," senior Lillian Armstrong said. "But that doesn't necessarily mean it's any worse."

With the growth of apps such as Snapchat and Instagram, some students might find it easier to communicate over social media. In a survey of approximately 300 EHS students, 40% of students said people flirt with them more online. 25% of students say people flirt with them more in person, leaving 35% saying both, so what is the appeal of using social media to avoid face to face interactions?

"I think the appeal is to avoid confrontation," senior Madi Walters said. "Personally I try to avoid it as much as possible, and dating is a very confrontational thing. Getting rejected online can be seen as a better alternative to being rejected in person."

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Getting rejected online can be seen as a better alternative to being rejected in person.

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- senior Madi Walters

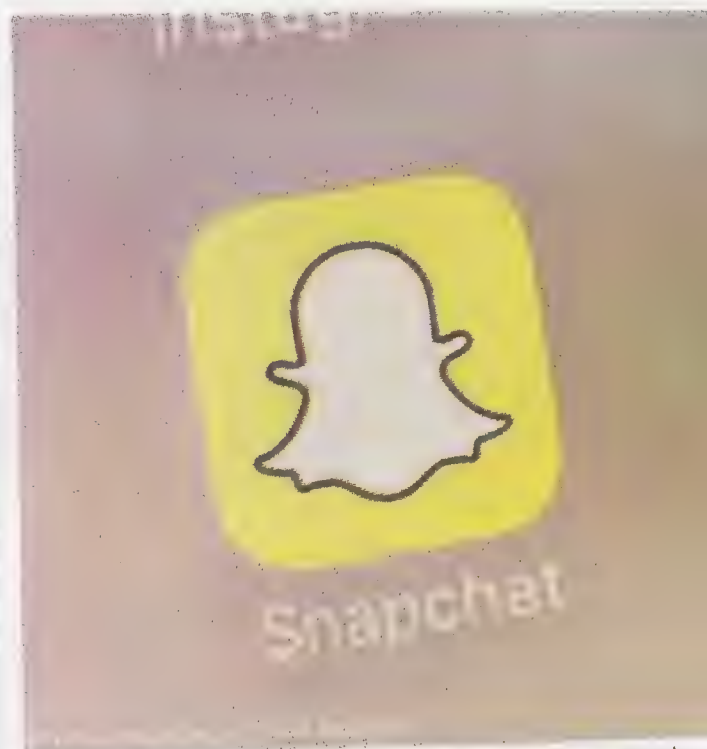
Now that a large majority of first getting to know someone is over a screen, has the general definition of dating changed? In the same survey students were asked, "What is your definition of dating?" Not surprisingly, the responses varied, but the general consensus was that dating was communicating to a person and having the label of being their partner.

So while the general definition of dating seems to have

remained relatively simple, the complication comes in the "before relationship stage," the talking stage.

What is the talking stage? "The talking stage is whenever you're not technically dating, and you're just trying to figure out if a person is compatible with you," sophomore Zach Gogue said.

Likewise, senior Cam Cole said, "The talking stage is like the get to know you phase. You aren't together, but you both show mutual interest in each other."



Snapchat is a common social media app amongst teens. Forbes states that Snapchat is the favorite social media app for more than one-third of teens.

Approximately 81% of EHS students who took the survey said that they liked talking stages and actually found them useful. So what's the appeal of this more than friends, less than lovers situation?

"I think the symbol of being in a relationship without the commitment of being in one is the appeal," Armstrong said. "A talking stage is like a free dating trial."

Senior Axton Anom has a similar belief. "Talking stages are good to see what the relationship would be like, almost as a preview," Anom said.

But while the talking stage can be a fun way of getting to know

someone without being weighed down by commitment, it can be confusing and riddled with questions.

"There's a lack of trust between the two because there's technically no obligation to be loyal and straight forward, but it is kind of expected," Anom said. "It's a sneak peak into a relationship. The rules of this stage are super relative to who you're talking to. One person might be more relationship focused while the other is happy doing whatever they want."

When Armstrong was asked about staying loyal during the talking stage, they said that the word "loyal" makes it seem like a real relationship. "I think it's more important to be honest about how you feel about the person, rather than being loyal to the person you're talking to," Armstrong said.

Loyalty, or lack thereof, can be one problem, but another problem comes when weeks go by and there's still no sign of being exclusive. You've been talking to this person for months, and you thought you had really clicked. But you're getting tired of talking and this person just won't make it official. So how long is too long?

"I think too long is anything over two or three months," Walters said. "After that period I think it's more of a close friendship and nothing will progress from it."

While the majority of students agree that the talking stage is a good way to get to know someone, senior Emmy Larrew says it's less about getting to know someone and more about validation.

"The need for validation over others is simply a human desire," Larrew said. "During the talking stage you get the chance to win a person over, despite being in a pool of other people. The idea of it makes people think that they're special. But in these types of situations most people aren't special, and when they think they are, they get hurt."

“

But in these types of situations most people aren't special, and when they think they are, they get hurt.

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- senior Emmy Larrew

With the introduction of talking stages that grew alongside the rise of social media, it's no surprise that the teenage dating scheme has changed. But for many teens, this change isn't necessarily a bad thing. Despite the difficulties that may come up during this awkward before relationship stage, Gogue still believes that they are a crucial part in forming a relationship.

"If you rush past the talking stage you can never truly get to know someone," Gogue said. "And despite seeming pointless at times, they can really lead you to meet some truly amazing people." ■

In a survey of approximately 300 EHS students...

4/10

students are in a relationship



19%

do not like
talking stages

like talking
stages

81%

97%

of students think social media has
changed dating

Halloween plans, but not always a love of costumes, change for teens

by Nat Becker, views editor

Students at EHS are preparing for the Halloween season with costumes and parties. There are some students, however, who will not be participating due to "societal standards."

In a poll of 378 students, 63% said they were dressing up, and the other 37% said they were either contemplating dressing up or were not dressing up at all. Some of the reasons given for not dressing up were because some people see it as childish or too much work.

"The people that are out on Halloween are young kids or adults," sophomore Samantha Hangsleben said. "Not many teenagers go, so the less that go, the more of them don't really want to go because no one else is going."

Hangsleben has plans to dress up with her friend, sophomore Ella McDowell, for Halloween. Last year, the two dressed up as YouTubers WilburSoot and Philza and based the outfits off of their Minecraft avatars.

"We entered the costume competition, but we didn't win because no one knew who we were," Hangsleben said. She said that she wanted to do a simple costume this year and not participate in the competition.

Even though many people in the poll thought that dressing up was for little kids, Hangsleben likes dressing up for Halloween and doesn't care whatever anyone else says.

"Societal standards are just societal standards," Hangsleben said. "If you dress up for Halloween for one or five years, what's it really going to change?"

That sentiment is something that senior Noelle Sonderegger shares.

"You get to express yourself as your favorite character," Sonderegger said. "You can make it fun, flirty or absolutely hilarious. You can do whatever you want with it."

Sonderegger and her boyfriend, senior Aidan Seemiller, are planning on going as Elvis and Priscilla Presley, inspired by Baz Luhrmann's biopic that recently released.

"My biggest prediction is that Elvis and Priscilla, as a couples costume, will be very popular," Sonderegger said.

This isn't the first time Sonderegger and Seemiller have done couples costumes. Last year, they were Morticia and Gomez from "The Addams Family."

"I have to find a way to one-up my costumes from previous years," Sonderegger said.

Senior Lillian Armstrong also has plans to "one-up" their costume from last year, having gone as Mean Girls characters with their friends.

"The plan is for my boyfriend, Ren [Mollett], to go as Batman and for me to go as the Joker," Armstrong said. "I kind of forced them to do it, since it was my idea."

Armstrong joins the marching band in dressing up for the Edwardsville Halloween parade, having dressed up as Black Widow last year to fit the "superhero" theme. Mollett was the Hulk.

"I really like to hand-make my costumes," Armstrong said. "I like going to Goodwill and putting it together so no one has my costume." Armstrong said that once they stopped trick-or-treating, it was harder to say they were going to dress up regardless. But they keep moving onward and put in the effort to make their own costume.

"Think of a really intricate costume so no one can figure out who you are," Armstrong said. "It's fun, people do it and if you're having fun that's all that matters."

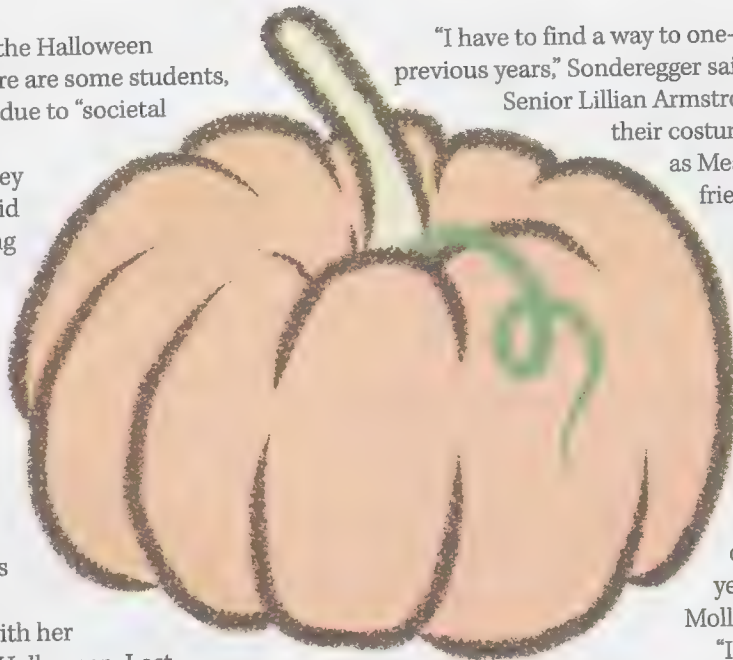
Sonderegger will also not be trick-or-treating because she thinks some parents will be weirded out that a teenager is out getting candy.

In the poll, even the people who are dressing up every Halloween still feel a level of nervousness when they go trick-or-treating. Some choose to stay at home or pass out candy.

Hangsleben, Sonderegger and Armstrong said, in variations, that dressing up for Halloween is fun and a form of expressing yourself. People don't always have to trick-or-treat to wear a costume.

"Now, will I steal candy from my little sister?" Sonderegger said. "Yes, I definitely will." ■

Art by Caspar Dowdy



Is modern Marvel missing its mark?

by Destiny Albrecht, staff writer

The popular Marvel Cinematic Universe ended its main source of viewership after the release of "Avengers: Endgame" three years ago. Since then, Disney has announced that the franchise plans to continue to expand with new content. But, are they really succeeding?

When reviewing the series, critics on Rotten Tomatoes said, "The MCU brings some of the most legendary comic heroes -- and some lesser known ones -- to vibrant, colorful, action-packed life." Fans fell in love with this fictional universe back in 1939 after the release of the very first Marvel comic book. Now, it has grown into 29 movies and 16 shows with 83% of student views.

According to a survey of EHS students, many feel as though the conclusion of the Avengers was the right move. However, 42% of them did not like it due to the deaths of characters they loved and grew up with.

"I mean it was very sad but definitely needed," senior Ava Long said, "I preferred it ended sooner with a good ending rather than it being dragged out with a bad ending."

The MCU has released several motion pictures and series since, each being a hit on Disney+. "Spider-Man: Far From Home" was a recent success, according to the survey. Many said that this one was, by far, their favorite.

Another example would be "Black Widow," which provides a backstory of the famous hero, concluding with her death. "I think she represents the feminist side of things in Marvel," senior Grace Williams said. "She's a girl boss, if you ask me."

"WandaVision" was also a sensation upon many students because it added to the storyline of the two characters, and to Dr. Strange's as well. Senior Jane Fitzgerald is a strong enthusiast for the show.

"That show was amazing," she said, "it had such fun theme songs every week and I loved that it referenced older TV shows in the decades. The plot twist was so good and I was genuinely excited every single week for the new episode when it was coming out. I followed all the theories and had my own. Everything about it was perfect."

But, that's where her praise ends. Her love for Marvel is "at an all time low" after the announcement of multiple characters and phases that have yet to come.

"I really stopped caring," Fitzgerald said. "I do not feel the excitement I used to. They used to have one movie per year and it was huge, it was exciting. All the anticipation was there and being in the theater to watch it was such a great experience. Now there's just so many new projects and I can't keep up with everything. It's not special anymore."

Around 36% of students do not follow the MCU anymore, specifically after the ending of the Avengers series.

It seems as though shows have been announced and released every week, and students find it difficult to stay on track with all of them. Some even say that they are unable to fully understand the newest movies because they have to watch them as prerequisites. For example, in order to fully understand the plot of the newest "Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness," it's suggested that "WandaVision" is watched first.



Most of the characters pictured above haven't been seen on the screen since the release of "Avengers: Endgame."

While 63% of students say that they watch Marvel shows, many agree that it's hard to continue due to the number. While all of the characters are thought out well and appreciated, the many different storylines are confusing to viewers.

Many say it's not as enjoyable as it used to be. The excitement of waiting for the next movie each year kept fans thrilled, but now the quality is overshadowed by the quantity.

However, superfan and senior Grace Ramsey believes that Marvel has lots of potential to excel, with all of the different angles that can be taken to expand the universe.

"Recently some of the movies, like 'Eternals,' haven't been the best," Ramsey said. "But, there are still so many cool characters and stories that already exist and can be shown on the big screen."

Ramsey is confident when she says she still has excitement for the future of the MCU, but Fitzgerald disagrees.

"I think it's time for them to accept that the period of excitement and thrill is over," she said. "They ruined it by rushing it so much."

What does this all mean for the future of Marvel? Will viewership continue to decrease? Marvel has a special place in many students' hearts, but is it time to call it quits? ■

Drag queens should be able to read children's books to kids. Get over it.

As drag queen story hour grows in popularity, some community members are not pleased that their children are learning about love and acceptance.

by Maddox Karnes, culture editor

Drag queens. They use over-the-top make-up, they wear towering heels and, according to some conservatives, they indoctrinate the youth of America.

Many drag queens play the roles of both entertainers and activists within their communities. Over the years, this activism has taken the form of drag queen story hours: events where drag queens read children's books to kids at local libraries. The topics of these books usually deal with love and acceptance. But for some people, reading books to children about such topics is where they draw the line.

I remember growing up hearing "love thy neighbor" and "be a good samaritan." But suddenly when a queer person tries to preach the same values, it's the work of the devil.

People have gotten so concerned about the readings that there have been multiple attempts across the U.S. to create legislation that bans kids from attending drag events. Instead of working to solve problems like the climate crisis, school shootings or really any topic with a sliver of importance, people have chosen to stand their ground on adults in wigs reading "Corduroy" to children.

"Parents that are against drag queen story hour typically have a preconceived notion on what it's about," said Chasity Valentino, a St. Louis-based drag performer. "They typically think that exposure to drag queens is somehow going to change the outcome of the child's life and/or sexuality."

Valentino has held drag queen story hours in the past, one of which was a reading through the Collinsville Public Library. People in the Collinsville area heavily resisted Valentino, but she continued with the reading virtually.

Public opposition is not uncommon for drag queen story hours. On July 19, St. Louis drag artist Maxi Glamour held a story hour at Glen Carbon Public Library. Upon arrival, they were met with people praying outside the library.

"Oh my god, they're praying," Glamour said in an Instagram post about the story hour. "Your prayers have been answered, here I am."

Glamour has held many story hours around the St. Louis area and has found a passion in reading to and teaching kids.

"Kids are fantastic, and their engagement as I dress up in high fantasy garb is so fun for them," Glamour said. "I'm like a blue muppet in a fancy dress reading books about being loved, battling inner demons and not making hasty judgments about others."

Throughout their time reading to kids, Glamour has found the value that drag story time holds.

"I don't think that all kids need to go to storytime with drag queens, but I do believe that the programming is essential for those it serves," Glamour said. "Most of the folks that come

are queer families or parents that want their kids to grow up accepting and affirming of queerness."

I do think opposers of the story hours, in their minds, have the intention of helping kids. However, if isolating kids from queer people is their goal; they're not only despicable human beings, but they're also wasting their breath.



St. Louis-based drag artist Maxi Glamour reads a children's book to a group of families at the Tower Grove pride festival.

It is an undeniable fact that queer people exist; nobody can change that. And sure, you may not let your kid go to the drag queen story hour, but that's not going to stop your child from having a gay classmate one day. That's not going to stop your child from having a queer teacher. That's not going to stop your child from realizing they themselves may not be straight or cisgendered. This isn't indoctrination; it's exposure and education.

"There's no hidden agenda to drag queen's story time," Valentino said. "Other than reading the story, possibly having a child who feels alone feel seen and [showing kids] that there are other people like them out there in the world." ■

Online shopping runs the world

by Kody Moore, staff writer

Many stores and restaurants have transitioned online to meet consumers' wants. As I was trying to find a homecoming outfit, I saw many name-brand stores such as Express, Macy's and Dillard's in Google searches.

I realized that my family and I rely on online shopping for many things. Every day after school, I go to my front doorstep to see at least two Amazon packages, and I open the packages to see that I or my family have ordered something easy to get from a store.

With overnight and same-day delivery, online shopping may be easier and more efficient than going to the store. It is easier to order your favorite brand of lotion while sitting on your couch rather than taking 15-30 minutes to travel to and walk into a store to find the product.

Even grocery shopping has changed due to online shopping. Many grocery stores allow customers to order their groceries from an app or a website. According to Heart.org, ordering groceries online reduces the temptation to add unhealthy products to your cart. It also allows the shopper to receive their items by pulling up into a special parking spot where an employee will walk to your car and deliver your groceries without an extra charge.

In contrast, online shopping helps consumers avoid these disadvantages. With online shopping, a person logs onto the Internet, visits the store's website and chooses the items they desire. The items are held in a virtual shopping cart until they are ready to make their purchase. Shoppers can remain in their pajamas as they do their shopping, and the process can be conducted in the wee hours of the morning or late into the night. Online stores are open 24 hours a day.

Online ordering allows buyers to see various competition lines that are present for one brand, further increasing the options for the buyer. The buyer can hold on to their purchase at one site while surfing the options on another.

Amazon will and is already taking over our daily life. The

online store delivers over 1.6 million packages worldwide daily, according to landing cube. It equals a total of over \$385 million daily for Amazon.

Amazon can deliver quickly due to its many warehouses throughout major cities and towns. The warehouses are used like an online mall. According to Tech Vision, whenever an order is processed through the app or website the program robots move up allowing for the "picker" to choose a certain item to prepare to package.

Shopping online makes it easier to send gifts to family and friends. With the quick and easy online websites and apps, there is no need to make distance an excuse for not sending gifts for birthdays, holidays and many other special occasions.

Many companies like Nike have taken a big step into the online shopping universe. SNKRS was released to be the ultimate destination for the release of highly coveted new sneakers. SNKRS ran in a "Draw-like" style, allowing many sneakerheads to get their hands on new shoe and clothes releases without being in big-name shopping hubs or cities.

One negative about online shopping is that many online websites do not allow returns or exchanges for the wrong size or anything else that might go wrong. In-person stores allow the buyer the flexibility to choose the product of their choice in replacement for the product they have already paid for.

Another major problem with ordering from online stores is that the site doesn't always allow the shoppers to receive the thing that they order. This means that the quality of the product is always questionable.

Ordering also allows the buyers to see various competition lines that are present for one brand further increasing the options for the buyer. The buyer can hold on to their purchase at one site while surfing the options on the other.

Online shopping is taking over our daily life, from shopping for toilet paper to looking for cars, and we need to accept it. ■





FB parents accuse EHS of placing litter boxes in school bathrooms

Disagreements broke out in Edwardsville parent Facebook groups as rumors spread of students using litter boxes at school.

by Maggie Terry, staff writer

Rumors of litter boxes in the bathrooms, stories about students being bitten by other students, and discussions about furry integration at EHS. These topics were all highlighted in an Aug. 28 post in the Edwardsville High School Parents Facebook Group.

What started as a simple question addressing unfounded rumors about litter boxes being placed in the bathrooms quickly turned into a social media battleground. The question spiraled into a full blown debate amongst Edwardsville parents arguing about whether the rumors were true.

Were these conversations driven by concerned parents? Based on the comments thread from this post, one could argue that this was no more than an opportunity for group members to debate their opinions and argue their politics with other parents under the guise of concern for students.

"So.. I heard something that I'm hoping is a dumb rumor. Has anyone heard of Litter boxes in the bathrooms?" was the question posed by one EHS parent.

It is unclear where the parent first heard this information.

Having litter boxes in the bathroom is associated with the widely spread rumor of furry acceptance at schools nationwide. Countless unfounded reports of "litter boxes in the bathrooms at school" have been posted online; the litter boxes presumably cater to student-furries. A furry is a person that identifies as an animal.

The comments section was then flooded with disapproving messages, eventually devolving into a thread of gossip and related furry rumors, including discussions on whether furries were actively participating in EHS student life.

"Last year my daughter was bitten by a (little) girl that identified as a dog," one parent commented in the thread.

Some group members, including at least one EHS staff member, tried to put the rumors to rest.

"I've seen this rumor enough times that I think it is finally time to put an end to this," the staff member commented. They then included links to two separate articles titled "What's the Deal with Furries" and "Claim About Schools Providing Litter Boxes

For Students Debunked In Several States.”

Despite the staff member's efforts to end the debate with facts and information from a firsthand source, the post continued to gain traction and the conversation continued to devolve into further argument.

The staff member's comments seemed to have been brushed aside.

Because of the traction gained from rumors on this larger post, the conversation migrated into the EHS student body.

Unlike the parents on Facebook, the conversation was quickly received with skepticism by students who realized it was nothing more than just gossip.

This poses the question: if the students don't seem concerned about this issue and can realize that it's just gossip, then are the parents really concerned about their student's welfare at school or are they looking for an outlet to channel their views and argue with other parents about controversial politically-driven topics?

Even though the rumor itself is harmless to EHS students, the spreading of misinformation on social media may eventually lead to more consequential incidents.

While I am thankful that the Facebook group has calmed down tremendously since 2021, the latest rumor raises the question of whether the primary functions of these groups are to provide helpful resources and information to EHS parents, or another outlet for community members to debate politics online.

A similar Facebook group, "Edwardsville Area Moms" was banned last year after being overwhelmed with disagreements, political arguments, and the spreading of misinformation.

"Edwardsville High School Parents" FB group started off as a helpful tool for parents about any concerns they may have, but signs of controversy are starting to peak their head.

Does the benefit of this type of parental communication channel outweigh the cost of misinformation and clashing caused by these groups? ■

I feel silly asking this, but I'm curious! So.... I heard something that I'm hoping is a dumb rumor! Has anyone heard of Litter boxes in the bathrooms?? Supposedly there is a Group of kids that identify as CATS???



31 Comments

Like

Comment

Send



Don't ruin it for everyone else

Claw Editorial: School events aren't an excuse to disrespect your peers

by Claw Staff

At the start of the day, as teachers start their lectures and students sprint to class, it can be easy to miss the morning announcements. Friday, Sept. 16 was a little different. Mixed in with the usual club meeting notices and Faculty Fun Fact Friday, there was a decidedly more serious message.

"Something to remember if you're attending the football game tonight," began the statement. "Here at Edwardsville High School, we believe we must hold ourselves to the highest standard of dignity, grace, and kindness. We all are ambassadors of our school and our families, and we represent and serve this community every place we go and in all circumstances."

The announcement would go on to encourage students to model respect at the game against O'Fallon, and warned that even one moment of un-ROAR-like behavior could change our school's public image.

Following that evening's halftime show, some might have to reckon with the way the world sees EHS.

According to several students who attended the game, members of the marching band and color guard were met with cursing and derogatory language as they lined up to take the field. The yelling is said to have continued during the performance and as they exited the field.

Recollections of the incident vary, as could be anticipated in a fast-paced environment like a Tigers home game. Some report hearing the harassment from the O'Fallon student section while others say there were members of Orange Rush involved as well. One EHS parent who is a teacher in O'Fallon took to Facebook to observe that students from surrounding, unrelated schools were

also present at the event.

While the blame for the situation isn't entirely clear, the culprit doesn't really matter. What matters, and what district administration addressed in letters on Sept. 18 and 21, is that members of our community were attacked in a place where they should have felt safe. The hard work that band and color guard members put into their performances was not celebrated, but belittled by their own peers.

The student section is notoriously wild, with rambunctious traditions and a talent for being loud. Some students seem to have forgotten that the chaos is only fun as long as no one gets hurt.

In the Sept. 21 letter, administration outlined a set of new guidelines for home games. High school students are now required to keep their ID on them for the entire game, and are limited to sitting in a designated area. Behaviors that warrant expulsion from a game were clarified — including derogatory language.

At the following game, there were teachers stationed in the student section, middle school students were seated in a separate area and IDs were checked at the door.

These rules aren't harsh, and administration can't be blamed for trying to keep people safe. But the new protocols should serve as a reminder for EHS: events like football games exist to be a fun outlet for school spirit, but they aren't promised. Before disrespecting the people who are, just like you, trying to have a good time, remember that one bad moment ruins the night for everyone else. ■



photo by Caspar Dowdy

Students cheer on the marching band and color guard at a Sept. 24 game against Belleville West, which took place one week after the O'Fallon game.

What does the St. Louis metro area have in store for you this fall?

First, where are you headed?



Across the river.

To me, fall means...



Sweater weather.

I spend time...

In the sun.



National parks, like the Gateway Arch, will be free to enter on Nov. 11. The entrance-fee-free days are meant to encourage everyone to enjoy their national parks.

In the past.



The St. Louis Renaissance Festival, in Wentzville, is open until Oct. 23. In its 24th year, the festival boasts live jousting, falconry demonstrations and scavenger hunts.



Spooky szn.

I'd rather have...

A good scare.



Until Oct. 30, Six Flags will host two Halloween-themed events. By day, the family-friendly Boo Fest, and by night, the horror-themed Fright Fest.

A good cause.



Nightly until Oct. 30, from 5 to 8:30, the St. Louis Zoo hosts Boo at the Zoo. The event allows guests to enjoy fall-themed events and entertainment while visiting animals.



Closer to home.

I want to support...



Local businesses.

I need a little...

Something to eat.



Fall is peak season for apple orchards, and Edwardsville is surrounded by them. From Mills to Eckert's to Liberty, there are enough options for everyone.

Bit of everything.



Even after the Goshen Market ends Oct. 20, there's plenty to explore in downtown Edwardsville. Spend an afternoon checking out local food and businesses.



Fellow Tigers.

I want...

An experience.



Drama club brings "Clue" to the stage in November. The murder mystery opens with an in-school performance on Nov. 10, and shows continue throughout the weekend.

A piece of art.



Edwardsville Band hosts its annual craft fair fundraiser on Nov. 11 and 12. The event, which takes place at the school, hosts local vendors and creators.

All art by Caspar Dowdy

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